

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4435) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Chair, I would like to commend the House Armed Services Committee and its Chairman, Honorable BUCK MCKEON, and Ranking Member, Honorable ADAM SMITH, on passage of the FY15 Defense Authorization Bill today that includes funding for additional Navy EA-18G "Growler" aircraft, as well as language to continue the EA-18G and F/A-18 E/F lines in my district in St. Louis, Missouri.

The United States Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Greenert, has testified to Congress numerous times this year about the growing need to control the electromagnetic spectrum to support the war fighter. He and the Navy have requested 22 additional EA-18G "Growler" aircraft, as part of an unfunded requirement, to meet these expanding electronic attack requirements.

I have a number of constituents that work on the EA-18G and F/A-18 production lines in St. Louis. Without additional aircraft from Congress this year, this production line will shut down, and we as a nation will lose a national asset—including thousands of dedicated and talented workers who make up this defense industrial base.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the coming weeks, especially on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, to help address this clear Navy requirement. We need to support our war fighter, and the EA-18G "Growler" is vital to operating and prevailing in the important and growing airborne electronic attack environment.

RECOGNIZING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRINCE WILLIAM LASSIE LEAGUE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 23, 2014

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 45th anniversary of the Prince William Lassie League for their continued service and dedication of providing a youth softball sports program for Prince William County girls to all walks of life.

In 1969, a handful of rural Prince William County residents were concerned that there

were not enough sports opportunities for young girls. They created a slow-pitch softball league for girls aged 6–16. This new sports venue quickly complimented the many sports venues for boys and provided girls a place of their own to play sports and have friendly competition. This new league of slow-pitch softball for girls was known as the "Dale City Lassie League."

In 1991, 22 years after its creation, the Dale City Lassie League became the Prince William Lassie League, which accommodated the growing county and its many families. With the dedication of volunteers and communities, the Lassie League has provided an avenue where young girls can develop athletic skills, cultivate life-long friends and learn sportsmanship. In the past 45 years, the Lassie League has supported between 12–15 thousand players and families through participation. The Lassie League now supports girls aged 5–18 and conducts two seasons (spring and fall) annually.

The doors to the Lassie League are open to all young girls in Prince William County, no matter what their social or economic background might be. For young girls whose family is financially limited, the Lassie League finds a way for that girl and her family to participate. The League also provides college scholarships annually to participating girls.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 45th anniversary of the Prince William Lassie League.

STOP ADVERTISING VICTIMS OF EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, sex trafficking is one of the most appalling crimes of our time. It is a modern day form of slavery, and deserves our attention and resources so we can put an end to this hideous practice. This is why I support the intent of H.R. 4225, the Stop Advertising Victims of Exploitation Act of 2014. This bill targets the facilitators of sex trafficking by prohibiting anyone from benefiting financially from or distributing advertising that offers a commercial sex act in a manner that violates federal criminal code prohibitions against sex trafficking of children.

However, I could not support this bill because it adds these activities to a list of current crimes for which mandatory minimums jail sentences are required. Simply put, mandatory minimum penalties do not work. They discount factors in crimes, prevent judges from meting out punishments that are tailored to the criminal, and have been proven discriminatory to people of color.

Mandatory minimum sentences make legislators feel good, but have wrought terrible injustices in certain cases. They have been de-

monstrably shown not to reduce crime rates. Even the Judicial Conference, the group that represents federal judges, has said that mandatory minimums violate common sense.

For this reason, I cannot support H.R. 4225—however well intended—because it prescribes mandatory jail sentences.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4031, the Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act.

First and foremost, let me address the serious allegations that employees at a number of VA hospitals around the country placed veterans on secret waiting lists and manipulated backlog data. This is absolutely shameful and if the VA Inspector General determines those claims to be true, we must hold those individuals accountable and swiftly remove and punish all employees who were part of this alleged wrongdoing.

Unfortunately, the bill before us today is a fake solution and provides no real fix to the fundamental problems at the VA. Its stated purpose is to hold senior level employees accountable by giving the VA Secretary the authority to terminate them at-will. However, current law already allows for Senior Executives to be terminated for poor performance. Moreover, the VA has broad tools to remove individuals from the SES who are rated unsatisfactory, while providing them no right of appeal. In the last two years, fourteen Senior Executives have been removed.

This legislation is an impulsive political reaction to an awful situation, and has many unintended consequences that could ultimately jeopardize the quality and care that our veterans receive. It would dismantle civil service protections that have been in place for decades and would open the door for political abuse and witch-hunts, effectively creating a mechanism where career federal employees could be removed because of their views or political affiliation. If passed, it would turn 400 Senior Executives at the VA—including many who served in the armed services and are veterans themselves—into at-will employees.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more important than providing for the men and women who have made so many sacrifices for our country. However, this bill merely provides a knee-jerk public relations response to a serious problem, and glosses over the real systemic issues we need to address at the Veterans' Administration.

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